

my comments will touch on following

Bildungsroman : coming of age novel (cf. Huckle)

a) comedy :

ii b) picaresque : tone of ^{some of} its comedy (25-27; 39; 52-3; 20-21; 88)
peasant picaresque ; b) tone of Labrousse comedy → 2nd level comment on moral values

iii a) impatiation (?) theme : definition of identity rather than out of community values

b) anti 'paysan parvenu' theme (montes & laus, last page)

c) 2 meanings of title

iv Occupation novel : a) no Germans! (inquisition, blood, war, some shortages (trans-matic, 48) prisoners 20, 200)
b) allegorical reading? Labrousse, Helle
c) noun : genre (12) = politique (137) 204, 215, 99

v a) no dialogue (on page) p. 39, 72

b) style indirect (libre)

→ full chapters (16, 17 (p. 209) (14-17) (Gigoux 200)

vi sense sensual celebration of French
realism of evocation of peasant life : some landscapes & the activities described sans romanticism : the lambing (p. 73, 75-77)
the butchery of the dead sheep (59-60); the truffle-sniffing (110ff); the heffling for cows at market day at Loudon; the tobacco-crop 140; the playhug w. cows (39ff)
woodcutting in winter (217); milking cows (177)
violence (199, le mont du sanglier) & cruelty (59-64, Gusselle)

i Bildungsroman : coming of age novel

(1)

definition, history, examples, theme

definition : Bildung : formation, creation, production, making
shaping, moulding, → education, culture, (apprenticeship)

'model of education' tracing formation & development
of individual character;

Hence, a young central character going through formative
phase or experiences; forming his/her values; developing
ability to make choice of self (in a measure, cf.
Les belles images, though not usually classified thus, it
wd. be an arguable definition of it) since at a larger
look, covering more of
Lawrence's life.

history & examples:

late 18th, early 19th, early 20th

Goethe: Wilhelm Meister (Young Werther), hence the
German name; ^{Romanticism & individualism age, favouring apertures}
of acutely pathetic experience of selfhood
origins of European autobiography also in that period.
Rousseau's Confessions; & Bildungsroman & autobiography
being diametric twins, symbolically linked in their

later institutions, in their forms, in their person on them ②
Such as growth - to - maturity, to choice, to freedom on the
edge of adulthood & often 1st person
G. Stendhal: Rouge; G.F. & Edue sent. → Freud
1913ff.

Eng: esp. early 20th flowering: J.J.; D.T.; Somerset
Maugham

Social milieu frequently important, its description, its values -
at times presented as hostile to full development of central
individual, hence need for self-emancipation from, self-
affirmation over (cf. J.J., Freud, Wilde), condemnation of

In Lewis, & even none of these predecessors are
apparent direct ancestors, or conscious models. But they
form the category, the sub-juncture to which it makes most
sense to allot La tene des autres.

In Lewis, the social milieu is rural France in 1940s.
the values are those of the peasantry (& of Laborious?): ^{cross, dirt &} significance;
^{& feelings} traditional ways; cheating the powers that be; hard work; & 2
attitudes towards sexual irregularity: that it's enjoyable in an
uncomplicated amoral way; that it's the source of rumors,
bad feelings & grudges harbored to surface as slanderous hints...

Hence, an important element in the central character's
Bildung (his coming of age, his growth to maturity) is his
sexual & emotional apprenticeship with Jane Helene, amid the

of la terre des autres as a Bildungsroman: in the paradigm of ②
the education novel, the hero defines himself in reaction against
the milieu, which is often presented as different from him, & it
is in contradistinction to that difference that he defines himself,
finds his truth amid their falsehood, singles himself out as the
other to them. Now, to a certain extent, young Max
does that: by joining the magnis on p. 268, he marks himself
off from the cross indifference & ignorance of the complacent
personality among whom he lives, who know little enough
about the war & care less; he reacts against to that ex-
tent, he separates himself from them, he disavows himself
from their values, which are not his.

But at another level, he does the opposite: he joins them,
by becoming more French than them; the personal value he
comes to is one which brings him closer to France rather than
(cf. JJ) separating him from it. That Romantic element
in the origins of the Bildungsroman I mentioned, favouring
pictures of self as the pathos of severance from others, shows in the
frequency of exile as a thematic necessity in many of the classical
texts that make up the canon of this sub-genre. Exile,
alienation, aloneness - 'silence, exile & cunning' (or even the ending
of Le Cid)
But here it's the opposite of exile that happens ~ is there a
word for the opposite of exile? the reverse of alienation?
'Empatriation'? Max Schuer (p. 124, 134) becomes non-Chien,
the foreigner who becomes assimilated, who begins as a

stateless (?) : 188
homeless, ^{refugee} ~~refugee~~, brought to La Malsonic by chance, leaves it
as a Frenchman by choice, as "le seul maître du domaine
et de la maison" (243). He loses his former identity (literally) & acquires
a new one, having been 'payan sans l'être' (p. 173) for much of the book.

Here we reach the title of the book, and its 2 levels
of meaning: La terre des autres ~ or rather the 2 meanings of
la terre.

The 1st level: the more evident of the 2 layers of
reference is the one ^{that most appears} shows in the plot: a boy, who is
a total stranger to the owners of some land, becomes a
factotum & labourer on it and succeeds in turning it from a
fallow & unproductive tract into a profitable agricultural
enterprise. 'Other people's land' is what he takes over,
and he earns precious little, in money terms, for his labours,
although in emotional terms he earns his belonging to it.
The land, in that unmeasurable moral ^{emotional} sense, becomes his; al-
though, in cash-value, as property, it never ceases to belong
to the 'others'. It never belongs to Max; but Max belongs
to it. Every chapter, every episode, is in some measure an
illustration of this development in Max's relationship to this
land, a development that makes him morally the maître du
domaine, but never legally or officially ~ even the relation-
ship with Anne Hébert can be seen in that way: she never
ceases being the legal wife of the owner, thus one of the owners
of the land; but she becomes, morally, emotionally, Max's
wife (p. 171). She identifies herself (231) with Valadon as Max feels her (= 'le vilain
de Max' 247) - 'Garde d'Éden?'
best 'domaine'?

this 2nd level of reference or meaning, can be seen in (6) some of the episodes, chapters, characters (but perhaps not all of them?) This is an allegorical level of meaning, in which, under the surface plot, another story is being told in the same words. By this reading, la terre means not only 'land' in the 1st sense of a tract of productive earth; but also land in the sense of 'country'; - in the sense, then, of France. The domain of La Malonia is an epitome of France, and of France during the war. Its rightful authority is absent: Pierre Dardene, line 8's husband, the legal owner, is a POW in Germany - here is the 1st level, literal, meaning; but a 2nd-level reading of that absence makes it a comment on France during the war: its legitimate owner, the Republic, the spirit of opposition to the Germans embodied by the Free French in London, this is what is absent from France. In its place is a usurper, one who has a spurious claim to govern France, a regime that has no legitimate title to inherit power, but which has given itself the right to occupy the vacuum left by the absence & misfortune of the rightful heir. At the 1st level, this usurper is Labrunie, who behaves as though he owns the place, hires & fires, makes decisions, yet who is only the step-father of P. Dardene (p. 8) - lecture p. 8: "C'était M. Labrunie [...] le patronnier"

It's in that sort of detail that it is easy to see at the other level, too, the non-literal, the one suggestive of allegory, as it focuses on that illegitimacy of the Petain regime, and the fact that it was, of course, hostile to the absent authority, the Gaullists who denied its right to govern France & who promised to continue the war, not submit. This identification of Labrunie with the pro-German regime of Marshal Petain is all the more irresistible when one sees that Labrunie is the operator of the collaboration.

has actually made Labrousse an embodiment of certain Pétainist characteristics, a mouthpiece for Pétainist sentiments, even in some ways in his person a reminder of Pétain himself; a frame of reference (10) his silver hair, his commanding bearing & appearance.

One might say, carrying the parallel a little further that Jouillisson, of the ridiculously uncouth name & general incompetence, represents not only the alliance of Pétainism with the peasantry, but possibly even the only PM of Pétain, Pierre Laval. And Mme Hélène, by this reckoning, may be France herself, or the eternal spirit of France, or some such mythic entity. - see pp. 131 "la Fr. éternelle C... protection" → p. 132 "sa protection", where France & Mme Hélène are described by Labrousse with the same word, the same idea. This certainly fits with the 1st. level details of plot: Labrousse begins by ^{reading} being the boss ('à la place d'homme', p. 11); but by the later part of the book, he has left, and Max runs the domain for, with & on behalf of Mme Hélène, much as, in the political sphere, Pétain began the occupation period as Head of State but had to leave by the end of it, leaving France to those who had opposed him, the Gaullists & the Resistance. Thus, he. Labrousse bows out, leaving Mme Hélène to Max, (who develops into a rival to the Resistance in the v. last p.) and Mme Hélène - who has had her secret cross de la Couronne (p. 135) all the time.

*cul-blanc (& cul-rouge): Jouillisson & Labrousse, who, ineptly run the farm in the early stages, are identified with the cul-blanc faction. I am uncertain of the exact meaning to give to this pair of names. But the white & the red are traditionally associated w. right & left in politics. See pp. 36, 39, 47, 52, 113, 204, 208 & some of which pp. also hint at the despicable & general foolery associated with the whites.

Let's look at some of the Pétainist characteristics of Labrousse.

Labrumi:

- i the association of him w. Rétan & Volup
France
- ii h. as a comic character
 - a speech
 - b dressing up
 - c grandiose plans & petty achievements
- iii → ^{mode of} presentation of L's speeches, ironic

le maréchalisme of Rabrouin: this word is used by Lewis (8) himself (p. 135) to denote L's out-&-out alignment with the policies pursued by the Vichy govt. of Pétain, the so-called État français: collaboration with Nazis, anti-British sentiment, ^{anti-republican} anti-semitism, ^{anti-semitism} ^{of} ^{patron} ^{of} ^{the} ^{peasant} ⁱⁿ ^{the} ^{redemption} ^{of} ^{France} ^{from} ^{naasty} ^{egalitarian} ^{socialism}; is bullshit about the soul of France & the special role of the peasant in the redemption of France from nasty egalitarian socialism; the so-called 'révolution nationale' that Pétain & Laval prided themselves on having set in motion.

- p. 12: 1st glimpse of Rabrouin's maréchalisme [lecture, ^{commenté} "La conversation (...)"]
-13 (like a speech of Pétain's)
(*) → ^{each passage important, of eil. presentation, ironic, instead of dialogue} ^{le dialogue}
p. 13: L'ui, h, représentait les destins de la Malonie en main (= France)
p. 15: anti-republican gibe
15-16: " " : a reaffirm of right wing regimes the world over
17 (bas) : 'la M. paraissait deses cendres, etc.' - révn. nationale >
p. 18: 'conceptions révolutionnaires' > 97 'révolution'
69: L's parallel between flock of sheep & governing a nation [lecture]
71: contd. 'les grands politiques' (cf. 61 'Les rois de la > p. 10 mes ^{howlousien})
(echoes of L's connection to authoritarian ruler figures)
trappings of command too: p. 81 boats, 'direction' p. 92 'troupes'
55 commands
(this picaresque episode of chaps. VIII serves to ridicule Rabrouin, who is shown, as a leader of men, to be capable of even emptying a septic tank!)
I'll come back to both the picaresque & to the military of Rabrouin
98-99: more maréchalisme, & anti-semitism too (99) > 10; cf. 115
100: L's attitude, harmonie entre la terre et lui - protective pose, his hand on the child's shoulder
(= 1st inkling of boy's femininity?)
106: symbol of malon assoc. w. maréchal
115: L. on his 'feminine' competitors & rivals
121: more commanding by L. (126 too)
misleading presentation of major themes & elements

124: recognition of '2 épaves' (reminder of France's situation?) (9)
(& here we learn narrator's name: Schauer)

131:spiel on 'la France étouffée' & gibe (concealed) at Max's Jewishness

135-137: Labunie's anti-semitic veiled gibes at Max, via 'monstrueux
combinaison judéo-macaronique' & 'victoire' & 'fratitudo'

151: Labunie's party speech: 'le réveil de l'Allemagne' & a
final allusion to Max's Jewishness

always seeing himself in relation to figs. of authority:
p66: 'les rois de Fr.' 55: 'dynastie': 71: 'les grands politiques'
10: his 'mes leçons'
Labunie's presentation as comic character:

Labunie is a leader
of men (so he sees himself)
who's only good at
leading sheep

That association of L. with maréchalisme & right-wing politics is
not separable, it seems to me, from L. as comic character. Ash.
is ridiculous, & is le maréchalisme ^{comparisons w.} Harlequin (78), the ring-
master (122), a character out of an operetta (135) ^{comparing L. to comic perfor.} are ways of de-
littling & deflating the bombast, pretentiousness & pompousness of a
man whose pronouncements (on everything!) all reveal themselves to be
hollow, ~~grandiose~~ & sententious. Full of theory, words, attitudes to
strike, Labunie is a figure of fun, whose greatest plans come to
nothing, whose greatest achievements are a mockery of his grandiose
ambitions. p. 13 'Tout cela allait changer. Lui, L., reprenait l'industrie de la
Melanie en main' - it's a fact, it all does change, it becomes a profitable
& fruitful land once more, but not because of L., despite him, & be-
cause of Max who does all the work, whose ideas are sound, not airy-
fairy, & who says little & does much. Labunie is the opposite: he does
little, except make a fool of himself, & talks a lot: p. 12 'l'usage de
prophète'; p. 13 'l'explication de...' 99: 101: on melons; 93: 'he falls in the pot' and
120, 121: 'hem miltend' in phrase'

He likes dressing up: p. 135 'sa panoplie'; p. 135: 'digne'; 91: his optic took gear;
climax of this is the hilarious scene of the cardigan lent to him
p. 106-109. (Notice that Harlequin, M. Copal & operetta also suggest fancy dress)

the ambitions of Laburne, his plans, his designs? - his achievements? (10)
chapter I: the map-reading (pp. 13-16). That same moral officer is in
repeated making sense of the map, or was of coming within 90° of the true
north when the sun's out! (p. 15)

p. 18: Laburne's 'conceptions revolutionising', all contradicted by the action
the builders etc who see the unrealistic nature of these conceptions

chapter II: the excursion to London to buy the 2 cows: it's L's idea to
go on foot ^(p. 19) so they get lost; it's L's idea to 'avoir à la rafale' (20),
so he gets all spattered with rain that he vomits through his nostrils.
L. advises Jonathan; bargaining for the 2 cows - but soon it turns out that
one of them is a ladgy; L. tries to make Jonathan walk without limping
(p. 32) & lands in the mud.

chapter III: p. 46 John's paradise, showing the gap between L's theorizing &
reality; p. 56ff. Laburne as shepherd → 58, the bitch ^{as shepherd} Ennette for his
idea, & she turns out to be a sheep-killer! (58-59)

chapter IV: Laburne as shepherd & he becomes shepherd! (pp. 69-70)

17: his technique with paint, put & brush for dabbling the ewes about to lamb,
17: the hyping of his theory about melons: the lab. at drive → chp XI: the

→ p. 10.1 Laburne's speeches; and
ironic presentation

red, the first
(pp. 119-129) of the
melons.

'Jupitration' theme: (we assume)

Laburne, on the pt. of leaving, says 'L'assimilation est sur la bonne voie' (152).
This ^{story of} assimilation is of Map the foreigner, to France; but also of loss
the city-dweller to peasantry, the growing ambiguity of his identity:

"j'etis paysan sans l'être" (173)

he begins as a total outsider: 238; ^{enters to peasants, merchandises 24-31 but not participant} taught by Georges (23-4) in lore; & to plough 37-42; in
he ends by outpeasanting the peasants: pp. 203-4; ^{fencing (50 ff) & in sexual things (52 ff)} 217; 185-192; 223; 243-244
he begins as a "Parisien" (then when, to the Dr. peasant, nothing ed. be more de-
servic of his own - see 190, 197, 203, 207, 236, 199) and ends up by inventing
another stereotype (which, of course, he isn't, but to them he is) of French
culture - ever since the 18th, the traffic in Dr. soc., in racial change of levels,

Lahurie's talking a lot, shows irony of presentation of this p. 10.1 character: a character who talks non stop in a novel almost without dialogue - just look at pages, how few inverted commas there are: ^{p. 36; 42; 132; 148; 157; 169; 170; 188; 190; 191} yet Lahurie talks all the time! Sometimes it's the points de suspension which show his speech (p. 12), sometimes it's less visible - see pp. 13-14 (lecture)

p. 14 (lecture) p. 15 (lecture) pp. 15-16 (lecture) p. 19; 32
(other p. 61; pp. 70-71; 98; 98-99; ⁹⁹⁻¹⁰⁰ 100; 101; 115; ^{117; 119; 123;} 124; 131;
135-136; 137; ^{138;} 137-8; 150; 151-152)

So Lahurie's reported speech is an important element of this text; it's also an important mode in the narrator's presentation of the character of Lahurie - the irony of this mode makes Lahurie's pomposity & indulgence evident without need of much comment by narrator; by being conveyed in this oblique way, the comments of Lahurie, his views, his opinions, are difficult for the reader to take seriously. Deadpan reporting without comment brings out the absurdities - what is said, as in the C... and the fragmentary presentation, as though Max not listening fully while we're on this subject of, though indirect speech, reported speech, let's look also at Fautoussan, some other peasants, & Mme Héloïse:

Fautoussan p. 12; 18; 22-23; 24; 27; 29; 30 (present); 31; 105;
peasants p. 28; 29; 29; 36 (glades) 36-37; 40 (example of how irresponsible in their
from narration) 61; 61-2; 72; 96;
Mme Héloïse: 63; 74; 80; 114; 114-5; 117; 118; 113; 130-131; 132-3; 143; 144; 183; 186; 186-2; 187-2;
184-185 (example of combined narration & dialogue fr. Max, pt. of scene) 187-2;
188; 188-189-169; 160; 161; 162; 163; 165; 167; 168; 172-3; 173; 175; 179; 183; 193
Max: 65; 115;
165; 175; 184; 185; 195-197 (= same as) 194-5 (201) 202; 202; 225; (23) 232
233; 244-245 (= imagination)

good example of
difficultly in
reporting dialogue &
speech

also 205-206 long passage
on attempt des interlocuteurs
multiples; 228: conversation

(romans de Marivaux), theme repris au 19^e par Balzac, Stendhal etc. The
problem here is that a Parisian (so-called) turns into a peasant.

'So called', because Max, after all, is not much of a Parisian - p. 163 shows Max casually as less Parisian than the sort of Parisian the peasants think of when they think of Parisians: the 'west-end' variety, elegant, sophisticated, cultured. Max is not any of these things; he's from the east end of Paris, the Jewish quarter near the rue du Faubourg St. Antoine (p. 163, 174); he's not really a Parisian, he's just displaced. At the beginning he's out of his element with both Parisians & peasants (p. 238).

So, this pseudo-Parisian becomes a peasant. And much of the book is a celebration of peasant things, the things that make up the daily experience of life for the person who works hard on the land for little material reward: the lambing (pp. 71-73; 75, 77, in chapter VI); the butchery of the dead sheep (p. 59, 60); the sniffing for truffles in winter (110ff); the haggling for cows at the market day (in chapter II); the tobacco crop (140-141); the plaything with a couple of yoked cows (38ff); the woodcutting in winter, cut in the snowy woods (217); the milking the round of milk quarterly into a pail (177); the breeding (p. 203) of some description of landscape (14-17); even a glimpse of the violence that is a part of peasant life (the death of the bear, p. 133) and the cruelty (p. 133) of the dog, insects, pp. 59, 64). All this is ^{presented without} described without romanticism, without any suggestion that this life is idyllic; but with a dense ^{richness of} personality as the author revels in the evocation of the

smells, the sounds of things, the feel and colours of things - for (12) young Max not only becomes a peasant, he loves it, & so enjoys the physicality that his whole life is made of.

Much of Max's view of peasant life is a comic one. This we see in his dealings with peasant characters: Joubertson, the main peasant character; Ligoux, the profiteering tobaccoist; Georges (& to a lesser extent the members of Georges' family); & Canteloup (in chapter XI) - these, apart from a handful of girls (handful in more sense than one), whom I'll come back to, are the bulk of the reps. of the peasantry as we see it in La Terre and its

Joubertson, even Ligoux, is only & incompetent; both he & Ligoux have a tendency to blame their wives when things go wrong (pp. 22, 191); Ligoux is dishonest, self-interested 'le plus patriote' (210), for him the war is a way of making money through the black market, which he justifies by saying that the black market helps the war effort by preventing the Germans from getting the goods that he makes huge profits from. His only interest in seeing an end to the war is so that business can profit (210).

a peasant's view of the war.

The view of the war, is remarkable. For 200 pp. it is non-existent. Not a German in sight. Shortages there are, restrictions, life is not easy. But no one wd. think we're in the thick of the greatest war ever fought in Europe. A complacent acceptance of the status quo is noticeable in everyone's attitude to the war, the occupation, the collaboration with Hitler - none a voice raised against it. If ever, rarely, the war is mentioned, it is called 'politics' p. 12, 99, 137, 204, 215 - (lecture comments of each of these: make the pt. that, in a sense France was in a civil war, none to become seen as such (except at the liberation, for a time), but in which it became more & more necessary to 'take sides'. To this day, you will come upon Frenchmen who believe that the whole

period of the Occupation, 1940-1944, was one of fine firm resistance (13) to the Germans. This novel shows it was far from that. Seen back coincides with the lesson of history in showing that it was only after 3 yrs. of collaboration that some French ~ & it was a minute proportion of the population ~ began to have 2nd thoughts (see chaps XVI-XVII when the knowledge of the war comes to Max & the others). The peasants' ignorance of the reality of the war is the subject of 2 of the funniest pages (204-205) of the book. And they only become interested in the war out of self-interest - see 2 ironic sentences pp. 209-210.

A novel of the Occupation period in which the Occupation is almost invisible - opposite to paradigm, Bary, Mon village & l'Europe allemande (1945)

The peevogue aspect of peasant comedy:

definition: peevogue < picaresque
'a rogue, a knave, a rascal' of low social origin, showing low life, the seamy side, frequently gross in its realism & full of coarse comedy drawn from aspects of sexuality, and unseemly aspects of human physicality: vomiting, defecation, urination. In French culture,

(where the peevogue is not indigenous), a word with broadly similar connotations is "Rabelaisian" ~ indeed, Rabelais' character of Brumpe is the best French equivalent of the Renaissance rogue for rogues, which in Germany gave Till Eulenspiegel, in England Sir John Falstaff, and in Spain the picares. (what is sometimes known as 'country matters')

Under this heading, (I glance at 3 elements or episodes: Georges and his merlou; the shipping of the rotte tank (ch. VIII) the scene with Yvette, the shepherdess, in chapter XVI.

Georges & his merlou: we 1st meet this entity on p. 39, during the nocturnal plaything, when Georges pierces symbolically on Fontallou's plaything (child lecture). This act of the penis as weapon of symbolic aggression is confirmed a few p. farther on (p. 52-53) where we see Georges in an exhibitionist - p. 52 says he's not, but what is exhibitionism if not that compulsion to show one's tabooed parts to those who will be shocked? p. 52-

where the peasants exchange misinformation & racist remarks, the 'patriotism' being acutely ignorant & amounting to little more than a mass superstition (end of 204), boastful bravado about their own country & scorn of Italian racing cyclists.

p. 52, the masturbation contest; the description of the encounter p. 53 (14) [lecture]. pp 154-155, Georges' exhibitionistic tendencies, gain, as long as he has a witness, first with the bride, the lavatory, Mme Hélène's underwear, then with one of the girls [lecture p. 155]. For all this talk, this boasting, these threats, from Georges, we never see him in action.

Ignorance: -

[Max is the 1 we see in action, mainly with Mme Hélène, but also with the Aborigines near Marianne (p. 101-103) - an episode of robust sexuality, describing Max's premature ejaculation, without a trace of comedy - and with Yvette (p. 196-198), where there is a perceptible comic tone in the haste with which Yvette makes the arrangements & tells Max to get on with it quickly, comme les chiens (197). Max's passivity here, and his readiness to be of use, add to the comic tone of the scene, which is bawry. Descriptions

That passivity, by the way, is manifest in all 4 of Max's 3 sexual partners: the Aborigine, Yvette & Mme Hélène. The sexual petite of women is a traditional cliché of bawdy humor. In a sense, Max is seduced by all 3 women, in that they make the advances, take the initiative, do all the preparations and lead him on - & Mme Hélène is quite a performer.

A 2nd similarity, at least between the 2 encounters with the peasant girls, is that they are both told in flashback, as it were, as Max remembers them: the 1st, to enjoy ^{strongest}, as he pretends to be listening to Laburni (p. 101), and the 2nd to enjoy also in retrospect as Mme Hélène more or less nags him (195-6). This 2nd episode, with Yvette, is interesting, too, in what it implies about Max's feelings for Mme Hélène - I say 'implies', because the fact is the text says little enough about those feelings. But it is clear that his lustful little episode on hands & knees with the peasant girl in Norway affects his feelings for Mme Hélène. He enjoys them both for

what they are worth - and it is clear that Jean Hélène is worth (15)
much more to him. However, the text understates this relationship very
much; and it's only at the very end, when the thought of Jean Hélène
brings him to tears that we learn of the strength of his attachment
to her (p. 265-266)

The strongest relationship he has, though, is not with Jean Hélène
but with what she represents, especially during their last exhaust-
ing night of love-making: "Où sont Valadiers, et je la connais,
me suit, toute me suit about" (231). And as he takes his last
leave of La Malonie, on p. 267, he discovers a hidden meaning in
les Valadiers, "le val à die, le valon de Dieu". A sort of garden of
Eden, a paradise of youth, sensuality, & ^{very} wholehearted happiness,
from which he is excluded, for ever, one supposes, on the last page.

La Malonie, as an enchanted domain to which he has given his
heart & his sweat, ^{which never returns} is not only the property of others which he now
emotionally owns, not only the symbol of France to which he now
belongs, but - [I leave you to end the comparison: =
the lost domain, childhood & youth,
as a place never gone back to...]

Back to Picavette: the septic tank scene, all of chap. 8 (p. 30-36),
not to everybody's taste as comedy, no doubt - but not to be
sniffed at (if I may say so) as a comic sequence: les petits Rampoux
a sort of team of demented & dourers who are specialists in spreading
the contents of the septic tank everywhere; Zalmi who slips and
falls in the poo; and Lepo himself who has to climb down into
the tank where he gets pressed on by one of the petits Rampoux.
In its way, it's a choice piece of picaresque or Rabelaisian
humour, - as well as a reminder of an aspect of life in the
French countryside which is familiar to many.

Under this heading of peasant aspects of Lamm's comedy (16) in La terre des autres one could also argue that the little scene where Lammie chokes on the wine & vomits it through his nose shd. be included (pp. 20-21); the cow-buying scene at the market (pp. 25, 27) where Lammie's nose comes within an inch or 2 of the arm of a cow or 2; and the scene where Max learns how you put your hand up the skirt of a waitress as she leans over the table (p. 18), an irreparable part of French rural customs to this day.

This is all coarse humor (of course!). But it can probably be seen as thematically justified, too - as a part of that paradoxical inversion of the payen parvenu theme: here is a Parisian who loses whatever refinement he had, and becomes an out-and-out peasant, engaging in all the dirty & unseemly activities that are inseparable from genuine peasant life.